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UNCLAS HARARE 001400

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/PDPA FOR DALTON, MITCHELL AND SIMS  
NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER  
LONDON FOR GURNEY  
PARIS FOR NEARY  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA COVERAGE PRESIDENT BUSH'S VISIT TO AFRICA;  
HARARE

11. President George W. Bush's visit to Africa continues to make headlines in the local print and electronic media. While the independent press is casting the visit in positive light, the government-controlled print and electronic media is denouncing the whistle stop tour of Africa as inconsequential. The government-controlled daily "The Herald" and the state-run radio and television station, ZTV, have dispatched reporters to cover President Bush's visit to South Africa. The July 8 main news bulletin at 2000 hours on ZTV One made the Bush visit its top story. The story included a live telephone interview with the organization's Chief Reporter Reuben Barwe in Pretoria, who gave a brief synopsis of President Bush's visit to South Africa. Barwe's interview was followed by another live studio interview with a political analyst, William Nhara, who said President Bush "is welcome" for as long as he is here "to strengthening existing economic ties" and "does not meddle in the internal affairs of other countries." Since yesterday, President Bush's visit is dominating news bulletins on all the four radio stations broadcast in English and the two major indigenous languages - Shona and Ndebele.

12. The lead stories in the July 9 editions of the government-controlled daily "The Herald" and the independent daily "The Daily News" focus on President Bush's visit to South Africa. Article excerpts follow:

Under headline "Uproar over Bush's visit" the "Herald" carried the following stories under sub-headline: "Mbeki imperialist says MDC":

"In a desperate attempt to attract international attention to coincide with U. S. President George W. Bush's visit to Africa, MDC supporters yesterday held an illegal demonstration in Harare denouncing South African President Thabo Mbeki as an imperialist. . . About 30 MDC demonstrators handed over a petition to the U. S. Embassy in Harare. The petition labels Mr. Mbeki an 'imperialist' who wants to see Zimbabwe 'perpetually weak so as not to pose a threat to his own country.' They ran and chanted along the streets carrying placards reading 'Mugabe step down' and 'We want a transitional government now.' 'President Mbeki has indeed lost the moral authority to mediate in the Zimbabwe crisis,' read part of the petition. Zimbabwe cannot continue to suffer because of President Mbeki's imperialist ambitions. . . ."

Under the sub-headline "U. S. demands on Zim impossible - media" the "Herald" carried the following article by Itayi Musengeyi in Pretoria, South Africa:

"U. S. President George W. Bush was due to arrive here late last night, amid South African media reports that Pretoria would tell him that his demands on Zimbabwe are impossible. Speculation was rife in the media that Zimbabwe would feature in talks between Mr. Bush and his SA counterpart President Thabo Mbeki following recent pronouncements by Washington that Harare should hold fresh Presidential elections. . . ." The article then proceeded to quote press reports from several Johannesburg-based newspapers and radio stations.

13. Under headline "Anti-Mbeki demo foiled" the independent daily "The Daily News" (07/09) carried the following lead story by Angela Makamure:

"Several people were assaulted in Harare yesterday and two arrested when riot police put down a demonstration against South African President Thabo Mbeki and Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe on the

eve of a visit to Pretoria by U. S. leader George W. Bush. Demonstrators numbering about 3,000 marched through the streets of the capital city's central business district, carrying placards denouncing Mbeki's policy pf 'quiet diplomacy' on the crisis in Zimbabwe. . . ."

14. Post will fax the full text of the articles ASAP.

SILLIVAN